

**Montgomery County Public Libraries  
Performance Plan FY09  
December 4, 2008**

**Contribution to Montgomery County Results:**

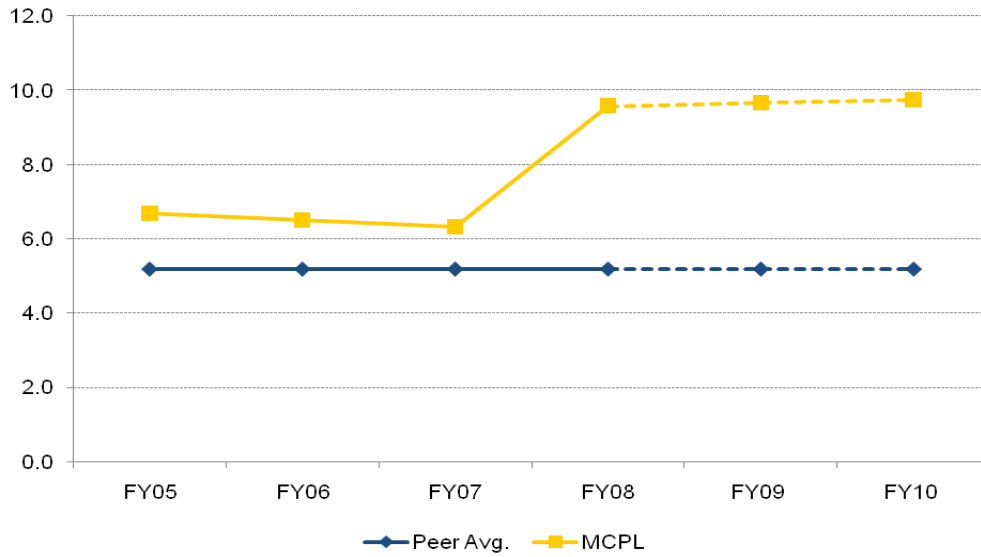
- 1. Responsive, Accountable County Government**
- 2. Vital Living for All Residents**
- 3. Children Prepared to Live and Learn**

<b>What MCPL Does (for everyone)</b>	<b>How Much?</b>
<p>Provide a prompt, accurate, useful response to customer questions that help them with school, employment, leisure, citizenship and other important life activities.</p> <p>This service is provided in-person at our branches and virtually via our Ask-a-Librarian service (email, chat, and telephone). In cooperation with the State AskUsNow program, there is 24/7 reference coverage via on-line chat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 610,340 information questions answered in FY08</li> <li>• 175.4 workyears (FY08, Less RIP) of State-certified librarians and library associates (40% of MCPL staff)</li> <li>• Open to the public 59,425 hours in FY08 (about 1,188 hours per week from 21 branches and one mobile services van). Branches open 40 – 64 hours per week.</li> <li>• Virtually open to the public 24/7, via content-rich and service-rich web-site; on-line/telephone renewal; and email, chat, and telephone reference (collaboration)</li> </ul>
<p>Provide physical and virtual information sources, professionally selected and maintained to meet both general and specific community needs, including: Pre-School Children, Children and Teenagers, Seniors, Visually Impaired Readers, Businesses, Language Learners, and World-language readers.</p> <p>This includes coordination of materials purchases with Public Schools, and a NACO Award-winning “Reader’s Café” on-line newsletter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.47 million physical items (books, audio formats, video formats), circulated (checked out) 11.4 million times in FY08</li> <li>• Growing e-book, e-audio, and streaming video content; and over 46 high-quality electronic reference sources searched almost 800,000 times in FY08 (Morningstar, Health Reference Center, Automotive Reference Center, Business and Company Resource Center, Academic databases, and more).</li> <li>• The most visited County Govt. web site, over 2 million visits in FY08. Actively managed, refreshed content, including “Kidsite,” “Teensite,” “Seniorsite,” “Reader’s Café” and “BizInfo.” Includes community participation in website content and design.</li> </ul>

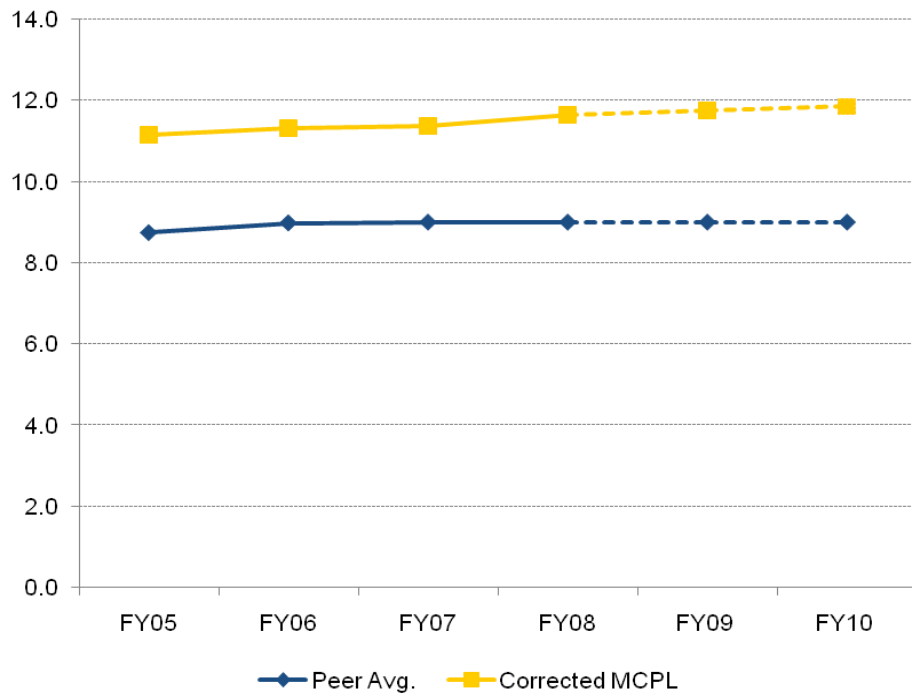
<p>Provide programming to support early literacy, children's school and reading needs, homework help, adult reading, culture, current events, community issues, English language learning, and other needs.</p> <p>This includes NACO award-winning programs for Children's Storytellers, English Conversation Clubs, and coordination of services for Seniors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 6,400 programs presented in FY08</li> <li>• Over 1,500 English Conversation Club programs (NACO award-winner)</li> <li>• Over 1,900 pre-school programs, attended by more than 71,000</li> <li>• Summer Reading program for 2008 had over 29,000 participants.</li> </ul>
<p>Provide a vital community space that fills a diverse set of group and individual needs, from tutoring-studying to recreational reading.</p> <p>Provide several heavily used public meeting spaces through the Community Use of Public Facilities program and provision of computer workstations to facilitate e-government transactions and other needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 branches, 444,000 square feet available in FY07, up from 375,000 in prior years.</li> <li>• \$120 million Capital Program (FY07-14)</li> <li>• 472 Public Access Internet Computers loaded with office productivity software (Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) and Internet access.</li> <li>• 5 Computer/Language Labs with English and other language learning software (also resources for extended resume development, homework, disability-specific equipment, and other needs)</li> <li>• 29 Meeting Rooms, used approximately 25,000 hours per year.</li> <li>• Tutoring, quiet study, and group study rooms in almost every library branch.</li> <li>• Literacy Council teaches more than 800 persons per year how to read and write, using MCPL space and receiving about ½ their funding from the County.</li> </ul>
<p>Overall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating Budget (FY09): \$40.4 million (Revised budget per Retirement Incentive Program: \$39.5 million)</li> <li>• Personnel Complement: 470 positions; 420.9 WYs</li> <li>• More than 600,000 registered card holders</li> <li>• More than 9 million visits in FY08</li> <li>• 88% of surveyed users visit library at least monthly</li> <li>• Per capita spending of \$40, near the national average for similar systems</li> </ul>

## Performance

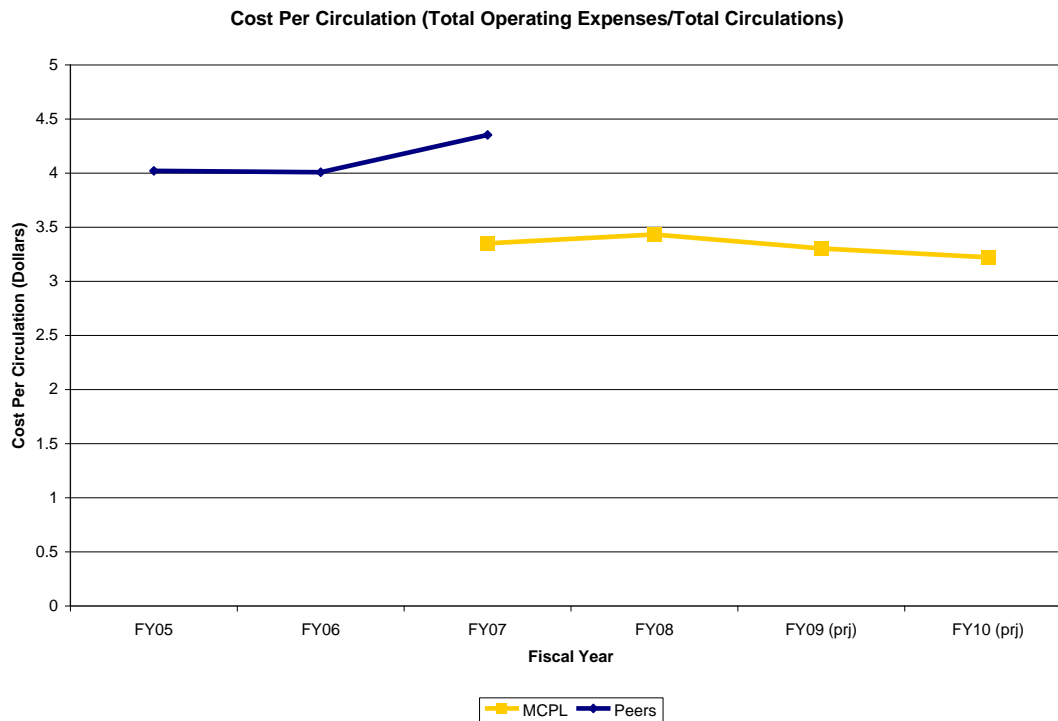
### Performance Measure 1: Circulation Per Capita



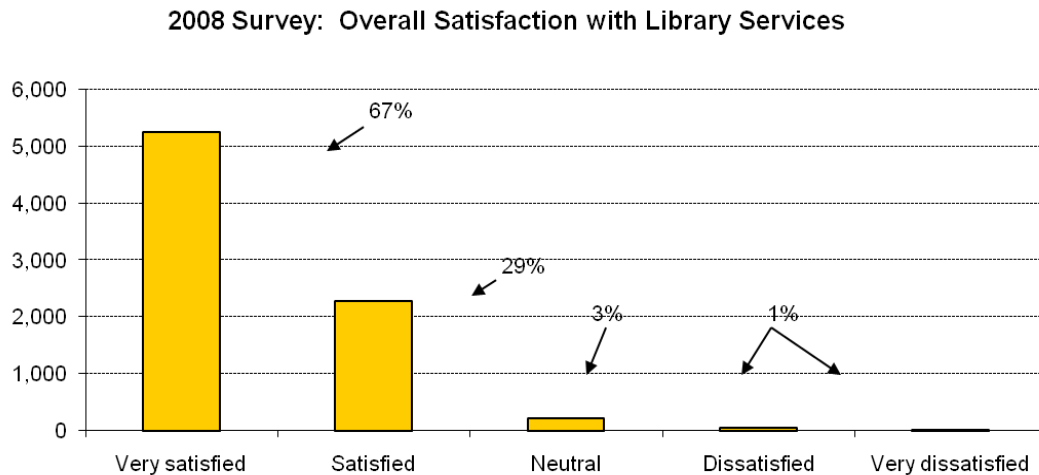
### Performance Measure 2: Visits Per Capita



### Performance Measure 3: Cost Per Circulation



### Performance Measure 4: Overall Customer Satisfaction (Direct Customer Survey, 2008, 8,000 responses)



## Headline Performance Measure 5: Community Impact (Under Construction)

### Baseline Impact of Library Services as Indicated by Customers (April 2008)

Impact of Service	Percentage of Respondents Indicated
Provided resources to research personal information (health, finances, purchases, retirement, travel, etc.)	44.6%
Improved my quality of life	42.7%
Helped me (or my family) with school assignments and projects	41.4%
Provided story times, books, and materials for my children	36.9%
Offered programs and materials for personal growth and entertainment	31.6%
Provided computers for my use and learning	28.9%
Presented a place to have meetings, relax, socialize, and have fun	20.0%
Improved my career options (career research, learned new skills, etc.)	19.6%
Researched job opportunities	16.8%
Learned another language	10.5%
Other	5.7%
Helped me grow a business	5.0%

Sources: Public Library Association PLDS Survey 65 Libraries serving 500,000 - 999,999 residents, FY05, FY06, FY07 actual data; Montgomery County Public Libraries corrected circulation, visits, budget, and customer service survey data and population statistics (FY05 – FY10).

## The Story Behind the Performance

### Contributing Factors:

#### Innovation

- Capital Investment. The County's substantial Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for Libraries has been adding to the space available for residents to enjoy library services. This investment now includes making libraries a substantial presence in town center redevelopment projects such as Rockville and Germantown. The new library projects have been innovative, the Rockville Library won awards and received national recognition. Substantial increases in space for library services have been realized (FY07: Germantown and Rockville). Major renovation/replacement projects are in detail planning (Gaithersburg, Olney, Silver Spring), and others are in discussion (Wheaton, Clarksburg) or are formally slated for design planning late in the FY09-14 CIP (Davis, Potomac).
- Expertise and Personal Service. Library professionals use professional protocols and responsive listening techniques in order to determine the information needs of any customer, regardless of age, English proficiency, or intellectual level. The strong marks for customer service and detailed responses in the free-text portion of the April 2008 survey confirm that MCPL staff provide high-quality service to our customers.
- Virtual Services. The Libraries has a strong web presence, it is the most popular County web site in 2008. A large amount and variety of information is provided via the site. We offer many high-quality databases that would be prohibitively expensive for an individual to own. Through a cooperative arrangement with the State, residents can even get reference questions answered 24 hours per day, seven days per week via the AskUsNow program.
- Public Service Hours. Public Service hours we offer are much increased from the 1990s, to their height in 2004, when there was a small reduction. In 2008 Sunday hours were expanded 25%.
- Community Interest and Involvement. Montgomery County residents are in the top quarter nationally in terms of library usage. The County has a very active corps of volunteers in the library services area, and along with other Marylander's, 7 out of 10 say library services are an essential service (Maryland Public Library Survey: 2006).
- Comparison with Peers. Montgomery County measures well when compared to peer library systems serving 500,000 to 1,000,000 residents. We are in the top quarter of similar systems in terms of visits per capita and circulation per capita. We compare favorably to the national average in terms of our cost per circulation, a measure of cost efficiency.
- Customer Service. The Department strives to give excellent customer services, as a core value and objective. The department recently underwent a review of several policies with the goal of modifying any policies that impede a good customer experience, and conducted a customer-service workshop for all employees. Our efforts are supported by the customer service survey, where staff availability, helpfulness, and courtesy were the top customer-rated attributes.

#### Innovation

## Innovation

- Data-Based Decision Making. The department created a position to coordinate the department's collection of direct feedback from customers and further our attempt to improve the use of data in making business decisions regarding the materials collection, deployment of staffing, and overall staffing needs. As one example of this improvement, data on circulation and staffing was used in August 2008 to make staffing re-assignments necessary to support the Countywide hiring freeze and retirement incentive program.
- Department "Cohorts/Committees" to Improve Service. MCPL has a very slim administrative structure, and this has been a roadblock in the past to addressing policy and procedure issues. To better and more quickly address policy, procedure, and operational issues affecting customer service, MCPL started several internal "cohorts," (similar in form to Management Leadership Service cohorts) which continue to review policies and particular business issues with the goal of improving customer service and enhancing the customer experience. An Innovator's Cohort has been established to solicit and assist in the implementation of innovative service ideas. A Customer Service committee reviewed all department procedures to identify policies that could be changed to improve the customer experience. Several changes have been implemented during 2008, including expansion of the time provided to customers using the Internet. A human resources cohort recommended several changes to recruitment and hiring processes, and staffing deployments were altered in the Director's Office to implement some of those recommendations. The hiring of key positions was centralized to provide for a faster, more efficient hiring process that also maintains the department's core value of enabling staff development and growth through competitive promotion.
- Strategic Plan and Departmental Workplan. MCPL has established a three-year strategic plan, and has constructed a workplan to support these efforts. Work will be organized by the department's senior managers and carried out at all levels of the organization. One initial part of this process has been a restructuring of the management assignments and portfolios of the department's senior administrators (Public Services Administrators, which are Manager II positions). The restructuring has re-aligned management responsibilities to coincide with strategic plan and workplan goals.
- Partnerships/Collaboration: MCPL is an active member in many vital County collaborations partnerships, including: Positive Youth Development, Collaboration Council (early childhood development), Community Use of Public Facilities, Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy, Literacy Council, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation nationally recognized Correctional Facility Library, the Manager/Leadership Development Program, and the Management Leadership Service.

### Restricting Factors:

- Changing Service Needs and Budget Reductions. Montgomery County continues to become even more diverse and complex, which drives changes in user needs and preferences for library services. Examples of these needs include the need to respond to changing language needs and preferences. Our ability to respond to these needs is reduced by substantial cuts in the budget during FY08 and FY09. The FY09 and

anticipated FY10 situation in particular has forced us to go into the materials budget to accommodate substantial budget reduction requirements.

- New Technologies. Montgomery County residents are technologically savvy, and expect to see new technologies in use in the system. It is a challenge to keep up the investment, training, and infrastructure to support new modes of viewing and exchanging information.
- Staffing Levels and Budget Reductions. Overall authorized staffing levels are a concern in the system, and the issue is heightened by staff turnover, budget cuts, hiring freezes, and increased demand during the 2008 economic downturn. Having over 25 long-term vacant positions to support the hiring freeze, added upon the loss of eleven permanent positions in the Retirement Incentive Program, imposes substantial difficulties in staffing, and in scheduling of training.
- Capital Improvements Program Budget Issues (FY09-14): Current indications are that there will be a substantial difference between old estimates that are the last published for library CIP projects and current cost estimates that will come from detailed designs. The difference is expected to be more than double the published project cost in some instances. The public will have keen expectations as to the timing and breadth of construction on these projects. In addition, there are some key opportunities and planning issues in Silver Spring and Wheaton which may cause some delay to those library projects as planning issues with Silver Spring are vetted and the possibilities for a library in the Wheaton redevelopment projects are considered. This issue will need to be handled with great care due to the expectations already established by the published Capital Improvements Program. MCPL will also re-review the proposed staffing and collection start-up and operating costs for each facility in the CIP. Finally, there needs to be consideration for a permanent Collection Management Center in the Facility Planning process. The current site is leased space which is insufficient for long-term operations.
- Facility Maintenance and Renovation. The County has made some substantial progress in restoring the system to acceptable levels of daily and periodic cleaning and has begun to address backlogged carpeting, carpentry, and other projects. However, with the branch renovation schedule now stretching into twenty – twenty five years per facility, there is a challenge to provide some level of minor renovation and/or additions to facilities that have a decade or more before a full renovation. The Quince Orchard Library is an example of this need. While relatively young in facility terms (open 1999), the library has become one of the top 4 busiest facilities in the County, and space in the facility is an issue.
- New Capital Construction and Upkeep. To-date, construction of new libraries has added benefit, and new facilities are showing increased or high usage as predicted. However, the addition of new libraries or construction of much larger replacement libraries poses budgetary issues with the need to ensure a larger, updated collection; add staffing; and increase service hours to match “town center” library hours more closely to the surrounding environment. These budget challenges are substantial, and make overall budgeting more difficult, especially in times of fiscal adversity.



- Recruitment. Recruiting for a diverse pool of experienced library personnel is challenging, particularly with children's and young adult librarians, and especially for part-time positions.
- The Internet. There appears to be a common misconception that the "Internet" can replace libraries as a source of information. It is our challenge to educate our customers and stakeholders customers about the value of library services and content, which is professional and where credibility of information is valued, versus generic Internet search services which do not necessarily emphasize or enforce credibility or validity of information sources. \*A recent study by the Pew organization underscored that there are significant groups of people that use the Internet but also value the services of libraries in particular in helping them answer specific questions (for instance, Generation Y (18 – 30), the first "Internet Generation" was actually the heaviest user of library services in the Pew Study). If we fail to continue to invest in libraries or in fact dis-invest, the potential consequence in the long term is that our populace will make less informed decisions (because without a library to go to, they will make their decision based on whatever other information they have on hand), and take longer, do less, or pay more to make other improvements in their life that could benefit from library resources (to name a few: learn English/other language, research a disease, divorce, child care, hobbies, build early literacy skills, launch a business venture, write a grant, etc.).
- Marketing. The system has a great diversity of service offerings. It is a challenge to keep the residents abreast of the many services available from the library and keep them updated on the latest enhancements to those services.
- Gang Violence and Disruptive Behavior. Instances of disruptive, sometimes threatening, and occasionally violent behavior have become an increasingly difficult challenge.

### **What We Propose to Do to Improve Performance**

- Assess Changing Service Needs. MCPL intends to focus more effort on obtaining direct customer feedback on its core services offerings, particularly the collection, general customer service, and programming. We will use a mix of surveys, focus groups, and staff observation to accomplish this. The April 2008 comprehensive survey we conducted was the first step in this direction. During FY09, MCPL will be following up on the results of the survey and planning follow-up surveys.
- Staffing Structure, Recruiting, Reorganization, Deployment. MCPL will analyze its workload and staffing structuring and deployment to address concerns about appropriate staffing levels. MCPL will also review its organizational structure and make changes as necessary to streamline decision-making and focus on improved community outcomes. This process began last year and continues. For FY09 MCPL has adjusted staffing levels and structures to improve efficiency, accountability, and rebalance resources based on activity/use levels and budgetary constraints. A portion of staffing structure, deployment, and reorganization are cost-neutral, but it is likely that there will be a need for additional staff in the future. New, larger libraries in the Capital Program will certainly require an overall increase in staffing for FY10 and beyond.

- Customer Service- Improve the Customer Experience, Get Materials into Customers Hands Faster. MCPL will continue a review process begun in 2007 to streamline policies and procedures, and will assess information accuracy to ensure customers continue to receive high-quality, efficient services. This will include reviewing materials handling procedures to increase the speed at which returned or reserved materials move to a required location. Other policies and procedures related to getting customers more of the materials they want into their hands faster are being reviewed in FY09. Policies and Procedures will continue to be reviewed to ensure that they are supporting a good customer experience.
- Improve the Materials Collection and Virtual Services. MCPL will work to improve the quality, quantity, and diversity of materials in the collection. This will include enhancing and expanding virtual services that can provide library services to customers anytime, anywhere. We intend to directly engage the community in discussions about these services.
- Training. Improve the quality of staff training, and focus training efforts on achieving service improvements. This is necessary to support the department as we hire many new staff to replace retiring workers, and to support our efforts to support improved technology and improve the customer experience. Each employee's performance and evaluation will include emphasis on training, and we will increase coordination with the State of Maryland Libraries staff and with our own OHR.
- Diversified Funding. MCPL will increase emphasis on diversifying funding sources for exploration of innovative technologies and techniques for library services, library programming, collection, and library facility amenities. MCPL has been working with the Friends of the Library, Montgomery County (FOL) on that organization's strategic plan, which includes a renewed emphasis on fundraising. MCPL will identify appropriate projects for fundraising, working with other County departments (OMB, DPWT) to ensure long-term budget implications are planned for in relation to those efforts. MCPL has also assigned grants exploration as a significant portfolio item for a recently restructured Public Services Administrator position. During FY08, the department increased its grant activity with the FOL, and won its first "LSTA" State grant for a special project in recent memory.
- Marketing. MCPL will continue to improve its efforts to keep residents informed about the full breadth of library service offerings. Improving marketing will be a key task of the recently reworked Public Services Administrator portfolio. We intend to pursue publishing a high-quality, comprehensive listing of program and collection offerings and doing more advertising of programs and services. FY08/09 accomplishment include a marketing advertisement in the regional editions of two nationally popular magazines, a campaign to encourage more library card holders, and a local cable TV show on library services.
- Intensify Recruiting. MCPL will work with OHR to intensify recruiting efforts, including improving the diversity of the candidate pool as feasible. We will be centralizing the hiring process to improve recruitment time. MCPL will engage in more active recruiting and more national advertisement. This will include attending job fairs, more advertising in a diverse set of publications, and working with the Office of Community Partnerships to identify other ways of getting recruitment information out to

the community. Review of organizational structure and staffing will include discussion of whether the present staffing structure negatively impacts recruitment.

- Technology. MCPL will continue to review how new technologies or updates to current technology can be applied to improve the customer experience.
- Programming. MCPL will continue to review and improve programming for children, youth, and young adults, and increase focus on programming for teenagers. Programming coordination has been placed as a significant portfolio item in a recently restructured Public Services Administrator position, and the department will be centralizing some of its programming efforts.
- Capital Construction, Facility Renovation, and Maintenance. MCPL will continue to collaborate with the Community and the Department of General Services (DGS) to recommend appropriate programmatic needs related to renovations and construction of new libraries to ensure the most is made of these opportunities to positively impact a local neighborhood for years to come. MCPL will work on gathering and presenting feedback and analysis on the condition and use of all our facilities to DGS, elected officials, and the community to support future planning. MCPL will also review the materials and staffing proposed for future Capital projects and provide any updated issue and cost data as appropriate.

## **Partnerships and Collaborations**

MCPL collaborates with both Montgomery County Departments, non-profit agencies and state agencies in order to increase services to library customers and support County services. These partnerships include:

- E-Government- MCPL's 450+ computers for the public are a popular place for residents to complete e-government transactions. As for flyers and handouts, MCPL staff often become knowledgeable in some of the more important government transactions (e.g., applying for a government job) in order to assist our customers.
- Informing the Public - Flyers and Handouts- MCPL is a popular distribution point for many government documents including: HOC applications, Senior Beacon, Recreation Guides, Federal and State Tax Forms, Voter Registration Information, and many other government documents. MCPL has to put a substantial amount of staff time and effort into managing these documents. For many of the important government documents, MCPL staff also provide information to the public related to the forms. In addition to County and Federal documents, MCPL is a place for important community documents as well.
- Community Use of Public Facilities- MCPL provides dozens of meeting rooms for use by the community each year. The bookings are managed by Community Use of Public Facilities. Both MCPL and CUPF manage the space, ensuring that the space meets user needs and is managed fairly.
- Literacy Council of Montgomery County, Maryland, Inc. – A long-standing contract provides the Literacy Council with one-half to one-third of its funding, and provides the

Council space to work. The Council uses volunteers to train several hundred residents each year how to read. In addition to our basic support, we are currently actively supporting a deeper level of English as a Second Language classes that the Council received State funding for.

- Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy – MCPL is the current contract manager and supported the founding efforts of this important County collaboration that supports English as a Second Language efforts in the County.
- Transit Support– MCPL sells Senior SmartTrip Cards, Metro Disabled and Senior media, and provides space for Ride-On bus schedules in support of the County’s participation in regional transit. When they existed, MCPL sold Ride-On Trip Tickets for the County at all 21 library branches.
- Volunteer and Community Service Center – this program matches RSVP volunteers with jobs that will assist MCPL in delivering needed services to its community of users.
- Montgomery County Public Schools– In formal partnership, the MCPL media centers director is an ex-officio member of the Library Advisory Board. Informally, MCPL coordinates is collection with summer reading lists and other student needs of grades K-12, and is a key provider of early literacy training, support, materials, and programs. MCPL and MCPS staff also collaborate and co-program.
- Ride-on – helps to support the summer reading program by providing incentives to young readers.
- Family Services Agency – partners with MCPL in the LSTA grant that provides a new model for early literacy for at risk families.
- Healthy Families – partners with MCPL in the LSTA grant that provides a new model for early literacy for at risk families.
- Positive Youth Development – MCPL is an active member of this County work group. By virtue of our locations in the community and our mission and programming, we serve numerous youth in the County and provide both active (programs, homework help, staff’s personal assistance) and passive opportunities (materials, computers, other information resources) for positive youth development.
- County Services for Seniors & the Persons with Disabilities– MCPL is a working member of both County workgroups in these areas. We provide programming, materials, Library Web Pages, and other services in support of services to these specific groups in the County. MCPL staff visit senior centers, and one library branch (Damascus) is co-located with a Senior Center. Visits to our libraries from various schools or other groups serving persons with disabilities are frequent. Also discussed elsewhere in this section are partnerships with the State to serve persons with visual and hearing impairments, and State/County/Non-Profit partnership to employee persons with developmental disabilities. In FY09, MCPL will be leading the installation of Video Relay Service “telephones” for those with hearing disabilities. That effort is being done at two library branches with a contract vehicle designed for multi-department use in the future, in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Training Programs for persons with Disabilities (Administrative Procedure 1-10) – MCPL is one a small number of departments that participate in this program. MCPL offers employment to individuals with Autism, they perform a significant function for the

department's Collection Management Facility. This is a partnership between the County, a local non-profit vendor selected competitively, and the State of Maryland (who provides funding to the non-profit).

- Street Outreach Network – MCPL provides books and book discussion facilitators over the summer to three sites chosen by the SON. These programs target youth at risk for gang behavior. MCPL also provided the initial collection for the SON library.
- SCORE – This Senior Corp of Retired Executives offer counseling for small businesses at the Rockville Library.
- State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped- Montgomery County is a repository for the Federal Talking Books Program, which is managed by the State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. We serve this function via our Disability Resource Center, which provides resources and staff at the Rockville Library, and trains staff throughout the system.
- Montgomery County Association of Hearing Impaired Children- has presented workshops for staff and the public on Beginner's Sign Language and Children's Sign Language. They also partner with MCPL to provide programs for hearing impaired children.
- Recreation Department – collaborates with MCPL in providing gaming tournaments for teens in the branch libraries, as well as the annual Battle of the Bands at Aspen Hill Library.
- Montgomery College and the University of Maryland - MCPL is working with both of these institutions to improve access to graduate library courses in the County, which would enhance training, recruitment, and promotional opportunities.
- Barnes and Noble – helps to support summer reading by providing the gift of a free book to each child that participates.
- Montgomery College Paul Peck Institute for the Humanities – partnered with MCPL in the first One Maryland One Book project.
- Gandhi Brigade works closely with youth at Long Branch Library, offering opportunities to participate in creating youth media projects.
- Gaithersburg Judy Center - MCPL presents a regular schedule of children's story times for the families at the Gaithersburg Judy Center. In addition, a class for the teachers and local child care providers will be taught in January using the new Parent Child Mother Goose early literacy techniques.